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DE RUEHEK #1337/01 3640823
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 300823Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2918

UNCLAS BISHKEK 001337

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [SNAR](#) [ASEC](#) [CIS](#) [KG](#) [KCMR](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#)
SUBJECT: KYRGYZSTAN: 2009-2010 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS
CONTROL STRATEGY REPORT (INCSR), PART I, DRUGS AND CHEMICAL
CONTROL

REF: STATE 97228

¶1. Following is Embassy Bishkek's submission for the
2009-2010 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report,
Part I, Drugs and Chemical Control.

¶2. Begin Text:

Kyrgyz Republic

¶I. Summary

The Kyrgyz Republic continues to have minimal internal production of illicit narcotics or precursor chemicals, but it is a major transit country for drugs originating in Afghanistan and destined for markets in Russia, Western Europe, and the United States. As in past years, experts still estimate that 20 metric tons (20,000 kg) of narcotics transit through the Kyrgyz Republic each year. The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic attempts to combat drug trafficking and prosecute offenders, but is constrained by limited resources. The government has been supportive of international and regional efforts to limit drug trafficking and has supported major initiatives to address its own domestic drug use problems.

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic recognizes that the drug trade is a serious threat to its own stability and is continuing efforts to focus on secondary and tertiary drug-related issues such as money laundering, drug-related street crime and corruption within its own government. In September 2009, the government implemented a series of reforms that shifted counter-narcotics responsibilities to the Ministry of Internal Affairs from the Drug Control Agency. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is reviewing plans for integrating Drug Control Agency personnel and equipment into the ministry.

II. Status of Country

The Kyrgyz Republic borders China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Mountainous terrain, poor road conditions, and an inhospitable climate for much of the year make detection and apprehension of drug traffickers difficult. Border stations located on mountain passes on the Chinese and Tajik borders are snow covered and unstaffed for up to four months of the year. These isolated passes are some of the most heavily used routes for drug traffickers. Government outposts and interdiction forces rarely have electricity, running water or modern amenities to support their counter-narcotics efforts. The Kyrgyz Republic is one of the poorest countries in Central Asia and does not have major natural resources or significant industry. The south and southwest regions - the Osh and Batken districts - are important trafficking routes used for drug shipments from Afghanistan. The city of Osh, in particular, is the main crossroads for road and air traffic and a primary transfer point for narcotics into Uzbekistan

and Kazakhstan and on to markets in Russia, Western Europe and the United States. The Kyrgyz Republic is not a major producer of narcotics; however, cannabis, ephedra and poppy grow wild in many areas. As of July 2009, there were no active eradication activities planned for the plants that grow wild.

III. Country Actions against Drugs in 2009

Policy Initiatives

Other than the reorganization of counter-narcotics responsibilities to the Ministry of Internal Affairs from the Drug Control Agency, there were no new policy initiatives in 2009.

Law Enforcement Efforts

Over the past year, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic has made a series of high profile drug seizures, culminating in the single largest seizure of liquid heroin in the region. In September 2009, the government reorganized key government agencies and ministries, including the Drug Control Agency, in an attempt to streamline government operations. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the government are reviewing plans to integrate Drug Control Agency operations, equipment and personnel into the ministry.

During the first half of 2009, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic increased the amount of seizures of major drugs (Heroin, Opium and Hashish) compared to the same period in 2008. During the first six months of 2009, authorities seized 179 kg of heroin, 118 kg of opium, and 285 kg of

hashish. Seizure data for the rest of 2009 are not yet available.

Corruption

As a matter of policy, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic does not encourage or facilitate illicit production or distribution of narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances, or the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions. Corruption remains a serious problem and a deterrent to effective law enforcement efforts.

In 2008, four Kyrgyz law enforcement (Ministry of Internal Affairs) officials were identified as participants in narcotics trafficking in the Kyrgyz Republic. Criminal cases against these individuals are still pending. The Drug Control Agency possessed a relatively good reputation, and its staff went through a thorough vetting procedure and received substantial salary supplements from the UN/US counter narcotics project. The MOBITS Units were also vetted and received polygraph tests, as did all Drug Control Agency agents.

Agreements and Treaties

The Kyrgyz Republic is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, the 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol and the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances. The Kyrgyz Republic is also a party to the UN Convention against Corruption and the UN Convention against Transnational Crime and its Protocols on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants.

Cultivation/Production

While there is no significant commercial production of drugs in the Kyrgyz Republic, cannabis and ephedra grow wild over wide areas, especially in the Chui valley region, and around Lake Issyk-Kul. There was at least one substantial seizure of locally-produced marijuana, which resulted in the destruction of approximately 1,400 kilograms of marijuana. During 2009, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic did not carry out eradication campaigns against illicit crops.

Drug Flow/Transit

Most of the opiates smuggled through Central Asia in 2009 entered the region through Tajikistan. The Kyrgyz Republic represents the main conduit for onward smuggling. Over the last few years, trafficking activities have remained steady on the long and mountainous border between the Tajik Garm region and Batken in Kyrgyz Republic. Onward smuggling through the Kyrgyz Republic takes drugs mainly to the Uzbek part of the Fergana valley, and across the Northern border into Kazakhstan.

Domestic Programs/Demand Reduction

According to the 2009 national annual report on the "Situation of Narcotics" published by the National Narcotics Center, the number of illegal drug users increased from 83.4 per 100,000 population in 1998 to 172.5 per 100,000 population in 2008 in Kyrgyz Republic. The report's data only includes illegal drug users that register with the National Narcotics Center at the Ministry of Health and the real number of addicts could be higher.

Existing economic problems and budget constraints limit the ability of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to address effectively drug abuse and related HIV/AIDS problems. In addition, insufficient funding is hampering prevention and treatment programs and training of professional staff. Programs providing treatment for drug users in Kyrgyz Republic are conducted by state institutions in partnership with civil sector organizations. UNODC also has a number of drug treatment assistance programs in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Road Ahead

The Ministry of Interior is reviewing plans for integrating Drug Control Agency personnel and equipment into the ministry. As of January 31, 2010, the U.S. will end funding of a U.S. Drug Enforcement agent on temporary duty at the Drug Control Agency in Bishkek.
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